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VOLUME LXIII, NUMBER 19293 THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 1996 • SIVAN 19, 5756 • MAHARRAM 20, 1417 NIS 4.20 (EILAT NIS 3.60)



Young people dance with flags yesterday in front of the Machpela Cave in Hebron at a rally held to celebrate prime minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu's victory last week over Prime Minister Shimon Peres. (Reuters)

## Arafat: We will soon declare state Netanyahu: Our position is unchanged

**JON IMMANUEL in Akaba and DAVID MAKOVSKY**

THE Palestinians will soon declare an independent state and no one can stop them, Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat said yesterday.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said such a state is inevitable, while King Hussein of Jordan said his country would never block the will of the Palestinian people.

The three were speaking at a news conference in the garden of Hussein's winter palace, following a summit to discuss Arab policy in the wake of the Israeli elections.

Prime minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu studiously played down Arafat's remark in a statement issued by his office.

"Mr. Netanyahu's position opposing the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital is known. The prime minister-elect stresses once again that Israel's position is that Jerusalem will never be divided and will remain united under Israeli sovereignty," the statement said. "Declarations will not change this."

Arafat changed the tranquil atmosphere at the news conference when he said: "We are approaching [the time] to declare our independent Palestinian state and its capital in noble Jerusalem. I mean it. This is the desire of the Palestinian people and nobody can stop it."

Mubarak backed Arafat, saying even if the Likud opposed statehood for the Palestinians it did not matter.

"All these statements in this charter or that charter," he shrugged. "History will prove that the Palestinians are going to establish a state now or hereafter, whether we like it or not."

Hussein added: "The question is the right of the Palestinians on their soil, and we are for whatever they decide on. We will never under any conditions be a substitute for them."

Hussein did not directly support a Palestinian state when first asked and spoke only of the inevitability of the peace process. He stated Jordan's position on statehood only after Arafat and

## Celebration in Hebron marks Netanyahu's victory

**HERB KEINON**

THOUSANDS sang and danced in Hebron yesterday to celebrate prime minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu's victory at what was billed as a "thanksgiving rally for the saving of Hebron."

A message from Netanyahu was read at the rally, held at the courtyard outside the Machpela Cave.

"Settlers of Hebron, city of our forefathers: I share in your joy but unfortunately am unable to be with you," the statement read. "I am full of appreciation for your Zionist and pioneering work, which continues the Jewish presence in the oldest Jewish city in the world — the older sister of Jerusalem. Be strong and brave."

This was interpreted by some settlement leaders as an indication that Netanyahu does not intend to pull the IDF out of Hebron, which the previous government pledged to do.

"This statement means that Netanyahu supports the settlement in Hebron," said David Wilder, a Hebron settlement spokesman. "I personally think that there is no reason to relate to any of the rumors [that he will pull the IDF out of parts of the city], and think that it is part of a disinformation campaign. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of what he said in the past regarding Hebron. I don't believe he will allow redeployment."

Wilder said the rally was to celebrate "the miracle that took place" that will keep the IDF from redeploying. He said he does not think the celebration is premature, since "the Likud was elected on a platform that Hebron can never be abandoned."

No Likud Knesset members attended the celebration, which was attended by Moshe MK Rehavam Ze'evi and MK Hana Port. Meanwhile, Hebron settlement leader Noam Arnon denied Palestinian charges that settlers, emboldened by the Netanyahu victory, had seized a building housing a Turkish bath adjacent to the Avraham Avim compound in the city.

Arnon said that Jews went into the room and tried to fix a ceiling and wall which, if they had collapsed, would have posed a danger to a preschool in the quarter. He added that the bath house is Jewish property, dating back to before the massacre of Jews in 1929.

Reuter quoted a Palestinian as saying that the Israelis "were effectively destroying the structure and using the stones to build a wall that would annex the bath."

"It hasn't been a week since Netanyahu's election victory and the settlers are already trying to expand their settlements," Salah Naishe, director of the Hebron Wakf, was quoted as saying.

## Jewish family moves into Silwan

**BILL HUTMAN**

SEEKING prime minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu's victory as a green light for speeding up settlement activity in east Jerusalem, the Elad settlement group has moved a Jewish family into a home Elad purchased in the City of David section of Silwan.

This move is the first expansion of the original effort to move Jewish families into the Arab village over four years ago, during the final months of the last Likud government. Eleven Jewish families moved in then, sparking international criticism. The recent addition brings the total to 12.

Neighbors said the Jewish family moved in just hours after Netanyahu's victory was predicted on Thursday.

"When I came back from work on Thursday, my children ran up to me screaming 'the Jews with their guns have moved into the neighbor's home,'" Ahmed Abassi said.

Several other Arab families reported receiving eviction notices Thursday and Friday from Elad attorney Eitan Gevah, according to Silwan mukhtar Lutfi Siam. They included the Abu Nasser and Ghudeh families, according to Siam.

David Be'eri, head of Elad, said, "Until now we have been working quietly, purchasing land and homes and waiting for the right time to begin moving families into the homes."

"We are hoping that Netanyahu's victory will allow us to move many more families into the homes we have already purchased," he said.

Be'eri said that while the family moved in just after the elections, the groundwork had been laid for this beforehand when several single group members moved into the home, which is surrounded by a high fence and Arab homes.

Elad claims to own over half of the homes and land in the City of David section of Silwan, which Arab residents call Wadi Hilweh, as well as other properties elsewhere in east Jerusalem purchased over the past several years.

Danny Seidmann, an attorney for the Peace Now-affiliated Ir Shalem group, charged that much of the property purchased was bought with money obtained by Elad and other settlement groups under the previous Likud government, and which a Justice Ministry investigation later found was wrongly given to the groups.

Seidmann based his allegations against the settlement groups on the Klugman Report, the investigation of the east Jerusalem settlement effort under the previous

## Netanyahu: Likud will have to wait until partners get portfolios

**SARAH HONIG**

PRIME minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu advised Likud politicians yesterday not to be impatient about their portfolios, which will not be allocated until after he finishes handing out appointments to the Likud's coalition partners.

Netanyahu was speaking following a meeting with the Likud coalition negotiating teams, which reported to him on the various parties' demands.

Sources around Netanyahu say he will have formed his coalition by June 17, when the new Knesset meets for its first session. But the Likud warned prospective coalition partners that their demands, especially basic legislation giving official sanction to the status quo on religious affairs, are problematic and probably unacceptable to the Likud.

Tension in the Likud over who will get what portfolio neared the boiling point yesterday. It has reportedly already resulted in a near rift with Ariel Sharon, who has not yet heard from Netanyahu.

Sources close to Sharon said last night that he would rather stay out of the government than accept anything less than the finance portfolio.

Yesterday, Sharon visited various hassidic courts in Bnei Brak to express thanks for the haredi community's support of Netanyahu's candidacy. In so doing, Sharon underscored his claim that he had largely mobilized haredi support.

The haredi parties reportedly support Sharon's drive for the Finance Ministry. They remember how he met their needs when he was in the Housing Ministry, it was said. Sharon himself, however, maintained a strict silence.

Gesh's David Levy, who is assured of the foreign affairs portfolio, said that "it is not right to keep Sharon in the dark like this."

But this had little effect on Netanyahu. He exhorted MKs Dan Meridor and Michael Eitan to finish drawing up the coalition guidelines in two days.

Netanyahu asked his negotiators to "keep in mind what our priorities are. We were elected because of our policy line. This makes the coalition guidelines far more important than the portfolios. First we deal with matters of principle — that which really matters."

The issue of possibly anchoring the religious status quo in Basic Law legislation, however, frightened the Likud and negotiating team chief MK Moshe Kazav "advised the religious parties not to put on the table demands which it knows that even the Likud — despite its being a party which respects religion and tradition — cannot agree to. No demands should be made which it is clear the other side cannot possibly accept." (List of demands, Page 3)

For his part, Netanyahu is unlikely to cross the religious parties if he wants to retain their support — not only for the short haul, but also if he plans to run for re-election.

Yisrael Ba'aliya is also concerned and its leader Natan Sharansky last night met with Avigdor Lieberman, who is slated to become director-general of the Prime Minister's Office, to warn that the party will be unable to accept any radical departures from the status quo which counter the interests of helping non-Jewish family members or immigrants.

Yehuda Harel, of the Third Way, said that his party "has no differences on the guidelines with the Likud. There may be differences between us and the religious parties, but we will retain the right to vote according to our consciences on religious issues."

The Housing portfolio remained the most difficult problem for Netanyahu, with Yisrael Ba'aliya again laying claim to it, as has United Torah Judaism. The portfolio is also being sought by Rafael Eitan of Tsomet and by several inside the Likud.

The idea of a national unity government is seen as a nonstarter in the Likud and the consensus is that if an offer is made to Labor it will be one of courtesy only, and only after the deals with the other parties have been closed.

Shas leader Aryeh Deri said that Netanyahu cannot really form a coalition with Labor alone because he won't be able to turn his back without fearing that he will be stabbed and that Labor at some point will walk out.

Formally, however, the Likud's likely partners all say they favor national unity, though inviting Labor would mean smaller slices of the government cake for all of them.

## Shavit: Mossad's role will increase

**ARIEH O'SULLIVAN**

SHABTAI Shavit, who recently resigned from heading the Mossad, said he believes that the role of the Mossad in the New Middle East is likely to increase in scope.

In his first interview since leaving the Mossad on Sunday, Shavit said he left a "well-oiled machine that knows how to deal with the challenges of the future."

Shavit said the role of the Mossad will grow: "While the inner circle in which we are moving is one of conciliation and acceptance, the outer circle is one of growing threats, which poses many challenges for the Mossad and for the rest of the intelligence community."

Shavit said Iran presents a long-term threat to Israel.

"We will have to deal with this threat because it is not one of religion, but it is a terrorist threat which has made its goal to torpedo the peace process under the guise of Islam," he said.

"I have no doubt that Israel has the capability to deal with these

## IDF kills youth in Gush Katif

HANNA Abu Atona, 18, of Khan Yunis, was shot and killed last night when he ran towards IDF soldiers at an outpost near the city and failed to heed warnings to stop.

Army officers are investigating. Sources in Gush Katif said the soldiers feared the young man was wearing explosives and so they shot him. They had first warned him twice to stop and fired in the air. The Palestinian Police said last night they were not aware of the incident. (Iftim)

## SLA soldier killed in zone

A South Lebanese Army soldier was killed and another wounded when a roadside bomb exploded as they were patrolling in the security zone in Lebanon, security sources reported.

The SLA force was clearing a road to allow the passage of SLA and IDF forces, when the bomb exploded. The attack, near Arahaleem in the security zone, prompted retaliatory fire from IDF artillery, the sources said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombing, but the ambush bore the hallmarks of the Hizbullah. (News agencies)



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# Religious parties produce joint coalition demands

HERB KEINON

BELOW are the coalition demands that will be presented by the religious parties - Shas, the National Religious Party, and United Torah Judaism - in their coalition talks with the Likud. The following principles were drawn up in meetings earlier this week between the three parties.

- Institutionalizing the status quo on religious affairs through a basic law, and rolling back the status quo to what it was prior to the 1992 elections.
- Amending the law on conversion so that Reform conversions can not be carried out in Israel.
- Drawing up legislation that would effectively bar the representatives of the Reform and Conservative movements from serving on the country's religious councils.

- Extending the law preventing the import of nonkosher meat.
- Amending the Antiquities Law so that there will be no excavations of ancient cemeteries without the consent of the rabbinate.
- Putting a halt to abortions for socioeconomic reasons.
- Stopping the running of buses before Shabbat has ended.
- Enforcing the laws against the opening of businesses on Shabbat.
- Closing Jerusalem's Rehov Bar-Ilan to traffic on Shabbat.
- Establishing a religious/haredi radio station.
- Granting a broadcasting license to Arutz 7.
- Making no changes in the new electoral system without the consent of the religious parties.

## 'Changing abortion law would not reduce unwanted pregnancies'

ESTHER HECHT

TIGHTENING the screws on women who seek to end unwanted pregnancies will not reduce the number of abortions; it will merely force them to pay for the operation on the private market, according to Joanne Zack-Pakes, director of Shilo, a voluntary pregnancy advisory center in Jerusalem.

Zack-Pakes was responding to demands by the religious parties to curtail legal abortions.

Today, abortions are legal in only four cases: if the woman is under 17 or over 40; if the pregnancy results from relations punishable under criminal law, like rape or incest, or from relations not sanctioned by marriage; if the fetus is likely to be defective physically or mentally; or if continuing the pregnancy is likely to endanger the woman's life or cause her physical or emotional harm.

"A fifth case, the so-called 'socioeconomic clause,' was abolished in 1979, in response to religious-party demands, when the Likud first came to power. But the following year, the number of abortions remained unchanged, Zack-Pakes said.

"If you limit access to [legal] abortion, it doesn't mean the woman will choose to continue the pregnancy. It means she will go to the private market. She'll borrow money everywhere to get it," she said.

According to Zack-Pakes, to reduce the number of abortions "we have to reduce the number of unplanned or unwanted pregnancies, by investing in sexuality education, in family planning counseling within the medical-service community."

## 'Haredi demands may end archeological research'

ABRAHAM RABINOVICH

THE acceptance of demands voiced by haredi circles in recent days for the amendment of the Antiquities Law will effectively lead to the end of archeological research in Israel, Prof. Ami Mazar, director of Hebrew University's Archeological Institute, said yesterday.

Mazar was reacting to reports that haredi leaders are demanding an end to all excavations of gravesites, as part of the price for joining the coalition being formed by prime minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu.

The haredim are also reportedly demanding that no archeological excavations be carried out without the permission of the Chief Rabbinate and that haredi inspectors be assigned to every archeological site.

"These demands are absurd," Mazar said. "If they are accepted, it would mean an end to archeological activity in Israel."

Mazar said that research had already been seriously affected by Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair's ruling last year that bones are not to be considered antiquities.

"This means that we have to turn over bones to the Ministry of Religious Affairs for burial the same day we find them," Mazar said. "This has put an end to any serious anthropological study."

If archeologists are not permitted to carry out their work, he said, it will impact seriously on development projects since by law no road or building can be built on a site containing antiquities if the site has not first been excavated by archeologists.

# Amirs' conspiracy trial opens

RAINE MARCUS

ASSASSIN Yigal Amir's notorious smile was seen again in Tel Aviv District Court yesterday, as his trial opened on charges of conspiring since 1993 to murder the late Yitzhak Rabin, illegal possession of arms, and conspiring to hurt Arabs and damage their property.

Amir, who in late March was sentenced to life imprisonment for killing Rabin had six years for wounding GSS agent Yoram Rubin. He is now being tried on these other charges together with his brother Haggai and Dror Adani. If convicted on all counts, each could receive 50 years' imprisonment.

The hearing began with the judges' unanimous decision that Haggai Amir's confessions to the police and the security service were admissible evidence.

Amir's lawyer, Moshe Meroz, had insisted that his client's confessions were extracted under pressure. Meroz argued that his client had been subjected to sleep deprivation and had been cuffed and chained for long periods of time. The lawyer added that interrogators had threatened to blow up the Amir family's house if he did not confess.



Yigal Amir (right), his brother Haggai Amir (left) and Dror Adani (second from left) in Tel Aviv District Court yesterday, as their trial opened on charges of conspiracy to murder Yitzhak Rabin. (Remer)

but had no idea what it would be used for. Two IDF officers also testified that Amir had asked them for an M16 rifle, telling them that he needed it because he lived in the territories.

Defense lawyers said they would summon Avishai Raviv, the founder of the extremist Eyal organization and a former GSS informer, to testify after the prosecution had finished presenting its case. They also said they planned to summon Margalit Har-Shefi and former GSS heads Ya'acov Perry and Karmi Gilfon.

The trial will resume on June 12.

## Aloni: Elections a victory for Amir

COMMUNICATIONS Minister Shulamit Aloni (Meretz) said yesterday that Yitzhak Rabin's assassin, Yigal Amir, had won a victory, having fulfilled his aim to "replace the government."

But she added, following a lecture to Tel Aviv University law students, that she did not believe that any government would ever release Amir, who is serving a life sentence plus six years for Rabin's murder.

After a hearing yesterday in Tel Aviv District Court, Yigal Amir's attorney Shmuel Fleishman said his client had voted for Benjamin Netanyahu and had cast his Knesset vote for the National

Religious Party.

"My client says that now all those who were afraid to testify for him previously will not be afraid to come forward," Fleishman said.

He added that Amir is happy with the election results.

Aloni spoke to the students about Judaism and Humanitarianism, quoting the Bible throughout her lecture to emphasize the paramount importance of law and justice in Jewish history.

"The importance of justice and fair trial, especially to the underdogs and the weak, is evident all through the Bible," she said. R.M.

## Demo held against plans to privatize IBA

DEMONSTRATORS carrying placards saying "Haim Yasin" have "no fear" and "Motti Kirschenbaum - don't give in," gathered outside Television House in Jerusalem yesterday to protest against the new government's announced intentions to privatize the Israel Broadcasting Authority.

The Likud often complained of biased coverage during the election campaign, and various IBA staffers, including director-general Kirschenbaum, are considered targets for dismissal under any reorganization.

"We came to show our solidarity and support for the IBA and its workers," said Erez Fridman, the rally's organizer and parliamentary aide to MK Dalia Itzik (Labor). Funding for the rally was provided by the New Israel Fund.

"We are scared of the threat to the nature of Israeli society and

fear the dangers hanging over the democracy here. We cannot just stand on the sidelines and look on," Fridman said.

The protesters chanted slogans including "The press is the watchdog of democracy; don't pull out its teeth."

MK Limor Livnat (Likud), who is seeking the Communications portfolio, dismissed the fears and said the demonstration was a political one by the Left, which had been frustrated in the elections.

"Privatization will benefit the public by increasing the number of channels and will improve the democratic nature of the country by preventing a situation where [the IBA] could serve as a mouthpiece for the government. We didn't hide our plans for privatization and we were still elected only last week. Presumably this is what the voters want," Livnat said. Liat Collins

## Media watchdog group calls on IBA heads to resign

ISRAEL'S Media Watch called yesterday for the dismissal of Israel Broadcasting Authority director-general Mordechai Kirschenbaum, television and radio division heads Yair Stern and Amnon Nadav, and legal adviser Amitz Shechter over alleged violations of a ban on campaign propaganda 60 days before the elections.

The right-wing, independent group, which brought 60 specific violations to the attention of the IBA, said its complaints and questions went unanswered.

"The IBA has closed itself from criticism by only using an internal monitoring committee which tends to cover up complaints," explained Media Watch's director, Yisrael Medad. "They simply have not been following the law."

Medad said the Likud was "justified" in its recent accusations against the IBA, adding that "it's clear from the facts that the media has a bias in favor of the Left."

Media Watch's chairman, Eli Pollak, said the alleged violations are generally not the fault of individual journalists.

"Most of them are doing the best job they can do," he said. "The problem starts with their

bosses and the orders they give."

Some of the specific violations mentioned by the group include:

- An episode of *Popolitika* from April 1st, in which Minister Yossi Beilin told the show's anchor, Dan Margalit: "We are bringing the country to peace." Although Margalit warned Beilin that stating campaign propaganda was illegal, he proceeded to ask Beilin's position on the final-status talks.
- Another *Popolitika*, 22 days

before the elections, in which Binyamin Netanyahu and Shimon Peres were given half an hour each to explain their campaign platforms.

- A *Mabar* episode from May 21st, in which Gil Sadan allowed Israeli Arab leaders Mustafa Jamal and Ahmed Tibi to call on Arabs to vote for Peres. The group recommended that the Knesset appoint an outside committee, with disciplinary powers, to look into complaints against the media. Such committees currently operate in Great Britain and France.

## Women suggest Blumenthal for Knesset speaker

LIAT COLLINS

TWO women yesterday called for MK Naomi Blumenthal (Likud) to be appointed Knesset speaker, placing an advertisement in yesterday's *Ha'aretz* that read: "When there are no women in the Knesset we must have a female speaker."

The ad was signed by Prof. Rahel Alterman and Dina Beniker, former chairwoman of the National Council for the Status of Women.

The number of female MKs has dropped from 12 to nine, said Beniker, a deputy rector of Bar-Ilan University.

"The new Knesset comprises only 7.5 percent women even though women form 50% of the population," she told Israel Radio.

"If there are not enough women,

at least we must support those who are there. Naomi Blumenthal is deserving of the position from the point of view of her capabilities and sensitivities. She is a very caring person, well-liked by all types of the population," Beniker said.

"She will be able to bring prestige to the position. We wouldn't have suggested [her if she were not] a suitable and capable candidate."

The Israel Women's Network, Na'amat, Wizo and Emunah yesterday issued a joint statement, calling on prime minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu to appoint women to key positions - as senior ministers, chairwomen of

committees or as Knesset speaker.

Blumenthal said she would be interested in the speaker's position but had not considered applying for it until it was suggested to her by others.

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Telephone 02-315666. Fax 02-389527. CIRCULATION - 02-315610. Advertisements - 02-315608, 02-315637-40

The religious parties' demands

THE religious parties' rise in last week's elections was dramatic. The haredi parties now have 14 seats in the Knesset, more than 10 percent of the total. And with the National Religious Party, they control 23 seats, an impressive bloc.
The reason for this is not difficult to fathom. Religious families are larger, and the growth of their percentage in the general population, unless offset by a large secular immigration, is an inevitable development.

The polls again

MUCH has been said about the failure of the polls to forecast the election results. But the polls were actually close to the truth in their predictions of the prime minister's race. They indicated that the gap kept narrowing until election day, and although on the last day most polls forecast a three percent lead for Prime Minister Shimon Peres, the pollsters warned that the advantage was within the margin of error.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PUBLIC FORUMS
Sir, - While making several cogent points about the neglect of the Negev, David Newman ("Second-rate citizens," May 26) also includes several unwarranted comments about the caliber of the persons who presented the positions of their political parties at the public forum sponsored by, amongst others, The Jerusalem Post.

REAL PEACE
Sir, - Shimon Peres didn't lose the race for prime minister because the majority of the Israeli voters didn't believe in his "New Middle East," but because the Arabs don't believe in it and the majority of Israelis (the vast majority of Jews) know that too.
In public, I don't exhibit my elation, because I don't want to upset the people who woke up from their sweet dream that was meant to be. But I found a lot of people in Gilo, bordering Bethlehem, just beaming, this Shabbat. We have to thank the officials who made the results public before Shabbat for giving us this wonderful day.



Man for the Mossad

THE curtain may be coming down on Shimon Peres' political career, but the bitter fruits of the lifelong feud between Peres and his arch-rival Yitzhak Rabin can still be tasted.
The latest victim to feel the effect of the virulent animosity that existed between the two men is Shabtai Shavit, the unassuming, highly professional Mossad head who retired this week.
A man who moved heaven and earth to keep the Mossad's activities secret, Shavit refused to play ball with journalists and feed them juicy news items. To stem leaks he ordered lie-detection tests on officials suspected of leaking information.

Uri Dan
Dennis Eisenberg
It was the Mossad who warned Rabin about how Iran's "Mr. Terror," Minister of State Ali Fallahian, was creating an international network of fundamentalist fanatics and suicide bombers whose purpose it was to spread mayhem in Israel and the rest of the Western world.
More recently, Western newspapers described how the Mossad had tipped off the Belgians, enabling them to grab a terrorist-designed combined rocket-mortar weapon that had been smuggled into Antwerp. The powerful Iranian-built device was intended for striking at a Jewish target somewhere in Europe.

POSTSCRIPT

FOR IMPACT, it sure beat an apple.
A nine-year-old boy in Clackamast, England, caused consternation when he brought a live World War II mortar shell to school as a present for his teacher.
The boy fondled the mortar while walking with his parents in a nature reserve used by the army as a war-time firing range.
"Whoa I saw it! I immediately realized what it was, but I did not know whether it was an explosive mortar or a smoke one," said headmaster Nigel Coren. "I took the device to an audio room in the school which has a steel door, a steel structure and no windows, before clearing the area." Army bomb disposal experts later removed the device and defused it.
A police spokesman said the device was "a smoke mortar which is not as dangerous as an explosive one. But it is certainly not safe for kids to play with," he said.
A FINE-ART antiques store in Paris became an exclusive grocery store, selling humble potatoes for up to a record 3,000 francs (\$600) a kilo.
"It's true this may seem folly, but it's a worthwhile folly because you can only eat them once a year," said one man after snuffing up five kg of "bonnote de Noirmautier" potatoes for 15,000 francs (\$3,000).
The potato, revived after all but dying out a generation ago because it did not tolerate mechanical harvesting, has a 1996 crop of just 20 tons from Noirmautier, western France.
At the antiques house, more used to selling Impressionist masterpieces, jewelry or fine furniture, experts said the tuber had a delicate, sweet taste.
Proceeds from the annual auction, where other rare varieties of potatoes also sold for caviar-like prices, go to charity.

In a funk

LARRY DERFNER

WHEN Leah Rabin said she felt like packing her bags and leaving the country, she was not alone.
The thought crossed my mind. It crossed a few of my friends' minds. I heard it a lot in Tel Aviv, on the telephone - it was in the air.
It wasn't serious. Nobody was planning to leave just yet.
But in a few years? I thought about it. For the first time in 11 1/2 years in Israel. I thought the time might be approaching when I wouldn't want to live here anymore.
Alright, we were hysterical. I think most of us have gotten over that, and are settling into a nice, mild depression. Ah, what are we going to do?
To tell you the truth, I don't feel like fighting. One of the reasons I wanted Peres to win was because I wanted to quit having to butt heads with the right. It's gotten very old - the same fights, the same rages over the same issues. I've been addicted to it, arguing with right-wing opponents in my mind for years now.

People are saying 'Let's hope for the best.' But it feels like somebody died

People are saying, "Let's hope for the best." Fine, let's hope for the best. But the truth is, I'm not hopeful. I'm just mumbling words. "I wish Netanyahu the best." Do? Then why do I feel a ripple in my stomach when I try to say it? It must be confounded rage.
This is just politics, isn't it? So why does it reach down so deep? This has been like a death.
Another friend of mine said that on election night, when Netanyahu started to overtake Peres, "I had a gut feeling like my life was in danger." I did what I always do when total disaster happens - I forced myself to think about paraplegics, cancer victims, people with real problems, so mine wouldn't seem so bad.
For days after the election I would wake up and immediately go into a funk on remembering that Netanyahu had won.
In snafu moments, I see reasons for optimism. Bibi won by 1%, actually a little less; he wasn't exactly anointed. You have to take the long view - maybe we're in for a period of retreat, but ultimately the peace will be made.
The right-wing approach is not only arrogant but also impractical, and eventually people will reject it. Or maybe Bibi will change. Maybe he'll really make "secure peace." It seems only a theoretical possibility, but I have been wrong before.
About a week before the election, when I felt sure that Peres was going to win big and history was going to be decided in our favor, I had one bothersome thought: "This is too good to be true. This is too easy."
Yes it was. We were complacent, and now we're going to have to wrestle with this thing some more.
Either that, or we can surrender, which is the most depressing thought of all.
The writer is a journalist living in Tel Aviv.

Vertical text on the left margin containing various letters and small text fragments.

عبدالرحمن الراجحي

# Unsolicited advice is ill-advised

DEAR RUTHIE  
RUTHIE BLUM

**D**EAR Ruthie, My friend's wife has many complaints against him. I believe she is telling the truth, from her perspective. But she won't even consider forgiving him or looking at his positive side. He is involved and good to his children. Many women would be envious of such a husband.

*to "Beside Himself Bachelor" (August 17, 1995). I am a nurse at a fertility clinic who has seen terrible suffering. While men produce fresh sperm all the time, even in quite advanced years, women are born with a number of ova which are susceptible to every vicissitude of the environment. The later the ovum is fertilized, the greater the danger of malformations of the fetus, and of infertility.*

*Modern gynecological treatises speak of finishing one's births by the maximum age of 30, after which the curve of misfortunes - both for mother and for fetus - rises steeply. The girlfriend in the letter in question is 33. Her biological clock is not ticking, it is screaming. Future fathers should be informed about this, since why should a man marry when he can have safe sex without commitment?*

*Ignorance of these facts is extremely widespread, as are infertility rates among Israeli couples, which have reached 18%. More and more people are prepared to go to Asia and South America to adopt babies. You have a moral duty to your readers to present this information.*

Unnerved Nurse  
Kibbutz Ha'ogot

Dear Unnerved, I am happy to present your facts but doubtful about whether such information - by itself - can transform the sexual or marital patterns of Israeli couples. Many factors influence relations between men and women regarding the age, at which they enter into commitments for the purpose of procreation.

Women's attitudes are no less responsible for the trend you describe than men, however.

The question of "why a man should buy a cow when he can get milk for free" is old hat. What's new is the unwillingness of women to use the "milk" as a bargaining chip for marriage.

The continual production of sperm is nature's way of ensuring reproduction - with or without commitment. If ova are as vulnerable as you say, it is women who must set the terms of uterine "transactions." But, as long as society struggles to eliminate guidelines for such transactions, neither my answers to a "wandering bachelor" nor your spreading of statistics will make a dent.

Letters should be addressed to: "Dear Ruthie," POB 81, 91000 Jerusalem. For E-mail: editors@jpost.co.il

Concerned for my Condemned Friend  
Somewhere in Israel

Dear Concerned for: the Condemned,

The problem you describe is perpetuated by both partners. As an outside observer, your natural inclination is to side with the person most visibly a victim - in this case, your friend.

Though perhaps more congenial than his wife - and though he may be the epitome of paternal saint-hood - he chose her as a mate. Pointing to the "many women who would be envious of [her for having] such a husband" is, thus, futile. Equally futile is the attempt to figure out how to get his wife to chuck her list. If she were asking my advice, I would tell her to examine the "profound" reason for keeping detailed score of her husband's "superficial" failings.

But she is not asking. Nor is her husband, for that matter. If he were, I would tell him to ponder his own part in the family feud. For, while trying to change the behavior of others borders on the supernatural, working on ourselves at least provides a "Petri dish" potentially conducive to healthy change. The two remaining options are continued negative dynamics or divorce.

However, unless our incoercible spouses are confronted, we are likely to go out and find another one eerily similar to his or her predecessor. It is this advice, if any, you might want to pass on to your friend.

Dear Ruthie,  
I felt angry at the way you replied.

# The Jerusalem 3000 phenomenon

HELEN KAYE

**J**UST last week, two more packages slid across Zvi Ravid's desk at the Jerusalem 3000 headquarters. They came from Hebrew schools in New York and Pennsylvania in honor of the city's birthday, and they're the latest offering in a flood of correspondence from all over the world that has overflowed from a filing cabinet into some 40 fat folders.

"People usually send their letters to [Jerusalem mayor] Ehud Olmert," says Ravid, the 3000 committee's coordinator, "and he sends them along to me. For instance, we've received scores of framed proclamations saluting Jerusalem. A priest in Peru collected 100,000 signatures on a petition blessing Jerusalem and presented it to our ambassador in Lima, Yoel Salpak."

Here current events have somewhat upstaged Jerusalem 3000, but around the world its success has been spectacular, celebrated by some 5,000 events in 72 countries. There are some 200 new sites around the world named for Jerusalem, including ones in Vietnam and Fiji.

One of them is the Jerusalem Fountain in Curitiba, a Brazilian city a little south of Sao Paulo. The three bronze angels on its plinth represent the three great monotheistic religions.

"I sincerely hope that the angels [will] be always with your people bringing peace and happiness," their sculptor, Lys Aurea Buzzi, wrote to Olmert.

To Israelis their capital city is a place where they live, work and worship, but for those outside the country, "Jerusalem is a concept, not just a city. It's a concept of holiness," Ravid explains, "a reason for yearning as though Jerusalem isn't truly a part of the real world."

"David brought the Holy Ark to Jerusalem," says Presbyterian minister Mort McMillan of Monroeville, Alabama, "which is a message for Christians as well as for Jews. For us, Jesus is the Messiah and the son of David and that shapes our understanding."

McMillan plays Anticus Finch in the Monroeville Heritage Museum's production of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which has its last performance at the Jerusalem Khan tonight. The Alabamans brought their production here because of Jerusalem 3000.

"The 11,000 voices" of the Protestant Christian all-Holland Choir, which also performs tonight at the Sultan's Pool, has come for the same reason, "and because we want to support and



One of 200 new sites worldwide named after the capital is the Jerusalem Fountain in Curitiba, Brazil. The three bronze angels on its plinth represent the three great monotheistic religions.

encourage the people of Israel at home and abroad," choir manager Meindert Leerling says. They are singing the Psalms and songs from the Prophets because "they are common to both our religions," Leerling says.

"We are singing a special song for Jerusalem 3000 called 'Jerusalem the City of Peace,'" Leerling adds. Jerusalem 3000 general manager Yossi Tal-Gan tells of 3,000 members of Makuya, a pro-Israel

Christian denomination in Japan, who arrived in November before the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. They came with special hats, banners, flags, and even balloons. They gave a concert to themselves at the [Jerusalem]

International Conference Center, danced Hebrew folk-dances at Safra Square and at the Western Wall, where they swept bystanders into their dance. It was one of the most moving things I've ever seen. They told me that to reach Jerusalem in the year of the 3000 was the fulfillment of a dream."

However, the reasons behind Jerusalem 3000 were a lot more prosaic and were fueled not by mysticism but by economics. The aim was to put Jerusalem on the map as a major tourist venue and focus for investment, not just as a place of pilgrimage.

The planned 17-month celebration, which started September 4 with a sumptuous sound-and-light show over the Israel Museum, drew diplomatic fire from the European Union. It branded the event as a not-so-subtle effort to influence the yet-to-be-discussed "final status" of the city under the terms of the Oslo accords. Moslem countries also declined to participate.

The boycotts made no difference, Tal-Gan says. To the organizers' delight, initial response to the Jerusalem 3000 calendar of cultural and educational events was almost dizzyingly enthusiastic. Proof of the pudding was that the city's 8,000 hotel rooms were 140% booked.

Then the prime minister was assassinated on November 4, "and the orders stopped coming in and the cancellations began. The decline was stronger after the terrorist attacks in March and peaked with Grapes of Wrath against Lebanon in April," Tal-Gan says.

The biggest cancellation was by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which was to have performed in September. The Arena di Verona is coming that same month with Verdi's *Nabucco*, and of the 10,000 tickets presold, 8,000 were canceled. Hotel occupancy plummeted to 70 percent, "and it hasn't started to pick up significantly yet," Tal-Gan finishes.

But the pain and the politics haven't crushed the 3000 celebration. Nobody but Chicago canceled. The Israel Festival's visiting artists have all shown up for their performances and none of the other Jerusalem 3000 visitors have bowed out.

And the people keep calling, like the Together Project from Spain, tentatively scheduled for November.

"They called me in March," Tal-Gan relates. "They want to bring 3,000 children from around the world in order to raise a peace monument for all religions. There's talk that each child will bring a stone from his own land to build it."

# Argentines shocked by poor cat-eaters

**S**TARTLING images of Argentine slum-children eating beef-and-grain-rich nation, and embarrassed authorities accustomed to trumpeting the success of economic reforms.

Recent television footage of the poor in the second-largest city, Rosario, skinning, gutting and cooking cats provoked public charges of government neglect.

Officials at first denied this was common practice and claimed the media paid the poor to grill the cats. But that suspicion turned to sympathy for the poor as public outrage grew.

It is election time in Argentina, with residents of the capital Buenos Aires set to elect a mayor next month. And officials are eager to avoid the food riots that engulfed Rosario in the 1980s. It is a decayed industrial city ringed by

slums swollen by migrants from poor provinces and hit by unemployment, which although 16 percent nationwide is an even higher 21 percent locally.

Peronist President Carlos Menem has said he was "very concerned" by the plight of the 110,000 poor in Rosario's shanty towns and raised the budget for social spending.

Politicians met on the issue and, as a first step, vowed to open another free kitchen in Rosario. "We will redouble our efforts," Social Development Secretary Eduardo Amadeo said.

Menem was embroiled in a row with bishops last month when they questioned the social benefits of economic reforms. The president said recently he hoped to make Argentina one of the 10 richest nations by the end of his term in 1999.

Analysts say that while the administration has made progress in installing order to the economic chaos it inherited, it has had less success in helping the poor. Officials began to dismantle a protectionist economy in 1991 by pegging the peso to the dollar, privatizing firms and reducing the size of the state with thousands of layoffs.

The government received praise for reducing inflation to 1.6 percent last year from 4,900 percent when the government took office in 1989. It led the economy to average growth of 7 percent a year from 1991 through 1994. Although it slumped by 4.4 percent last year, it is expected to rebound this year.

The private Research Foundation for Development (FIDE) says the share of total income earned by poorer Argentines in greater Buenos Aires fell slightly to 13.3 percent in 1995

from 1990. Meanwhile, the share earned by richer Argentines in the capital area, where one-third of the population lives, rose slightly to 52.7 percent.

The charity Caritas recently accused the government of ignoring the poor and jobless in a country where top-quality beef is a daily staple food and cereals are a major export.

"We Argentines are ashamed to talk about poverty," Elisa Maria Carrio, legislator for the opposition Radical Party, said in an interview. "Let's start to debate these issues. People are eating cats. They are going hungry."

Commentator Mariano Grondona invited the forlorn subjects of the television footage to his live political talk show, the most popular in Argentina, where they pleaded with officials for assistance.



Two boys search for food in a garbage container in Buenos Aires. (Reuters)



**Micky's**

Mifal Hapayis

# 100,000th basket

**Play it, Micky on Hish Gad Sal**

**First Prize - NIS 100,000**

What's happened? Micky's back on the court. Starting today you'll be seeing him on the Hish Gad basketball court. You'll play on the same team. A victory for your team means you hit the jackpot and win the NIS 100,000 first prize or one of the other hundreds of thousands of Hish Gad basketball prizes. Just pass the ball to Micky, even in the game's final second, and as usual, he'll sink the 100,000th basket.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Thursday, June 6, 1996

'Builders' credit at dangerously high level

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

THE banking sector's overall credit to the construction industry in 1995 was excessively high, resulting in a high credit-to-product ratio and a potentially severe debt-repayment problem in the future...

According to the report, which will be officially released next week, the general public's credit-to-product ratio, which gauges the public's ability to repay its debts, reached 69% last year...

However, the construction industry's credit-to-product ratio increased 130%, a pace which is double that of other sectors...

Last year the banks' credit weight and credit risk ratios, resulting from provision of guarantees and execution of futures contracts to the construction sector, continued to grow...

to the sector compared with 13% in total credit given to the public.

The central bank said the availability of banking sources to the construction sector stemmed primarily from its accelerated activity.

The growth in credit is also due to the continued rise in the housing index compared with the Consumer Price Index...

The growth in banking sources to the sector also reflects a drop in the weight of public sector's investments in residential building to 20% in the last two years...

The Bank of Israel emphasized that up until the start of 1995, banks did not have to register additional provisions for doubtful debts since they kept banking sources below the 20% maximum level of credit which they are permitted to grant to the industry.

But, since the first half of 1995, some of the banks were forced to make additional provisions.

UBS: Post-election Israel equally worthy of investment

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

UNION Bank of Switzerland (UBS), one of the world's most prominent banks and Switzerland's largest, expects Israel to remain an investment attraction, though after a short period of uncertainty resulting from last week's elections.

UBS Global Research, which surveys markets for the bank, yesterday published an optimistic update on the Israel's post-election market status, intended to calm foreign investors concerned with Israel's economic prospects under a new administration.

Commenting on the peace process, the analysts said a change of pace and emphasis is expected, but the direction would remain more or less the same.

Israeli history shows that hawks have encountered less opposition when compromising, said the report, which also suggested that Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu knows the majority of Israelis want peace.

UBS forecasts that after an initial period in which companies,

monetary authorities, neighboring countries and investors will exercise caution and evaluate the policies of the new administration, the economy's hitherto robust performance will continue.

A sustainable long-term economic growth rate of 5% is achievable and policy will focus on curtailing inflation. The privatization process will be accelerated by the new government and investment in infrastructure and structural reforms should continue.

The report deals specifically with three major issues: the economic policy framework, medium-term growth of consumption and investment, and the prospective effect of changes in progress on the peace process on export opportunities and direct foreign investment.

According to the analysts, a Likud-led government will broadly economic policy unchanged and continue to target for a budget deficit of 2.5% annu-

ally, an inflation target of between 8%-10% and a 6% annual depreciation of the trade-weighted exchange rate.

However, UBS cautioned that as things stand, all three targets will be missed. The budget deficit is running at 4% of GDP, giving cause for concern; inflation appears to be heading toward 12% to 13% and the exchange rate's pace of depreciation has accelerated in recent weeks.

Investment growth, according to the report, may be negatively affected by uncertainty in the short term, while buoyed overall consumption levels will increase in 1996, before moderating in 1997.

As for trade, the analysts do not see any politically driven shift in recent patterns of rapid diversification. Israel should continue to be a magnet for foreign investors as long as economic policy remains broadly unchanged and pragmatism rules foreign relations.

Short-term interest rates, according to the report, are likely to rise initially from 15.5% to 18%, as monetary authorities try to preempt effects of a higher-than-expected growth in the money supply.

BUSINESS BRIEF

Mercedes smuggling ring uncovered: The Customs and VAT Department said yesterday it has uncovered a Mercedes smuggling ring. Customs officers believe German tourists were driving the cars into Gaza.

Tourists were convinced to take part in the operation by a Palestinian living in Germany. He placed advertisements offering free holidays in Israel to anyone who would drive a car to Israel and then deliver it to his brother in Gaza.

One such tourist, who arrived at Haifa, was given a temporary, tourist tax exemption for the vehicle. After delivering the Mercedes to Gaza, he was stopped at Rafiah on the Egyptian border. During questioning, the tourist revealed that about 10 other vehicles had been successfully smuggled across the border.

David Harris

At least 3 bidders vie for General Bank

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

AT least three consortia are expected to submit bids to purchase control of General Bank on Sunday, the last date for submission, sources close to the sale said yesterday.

Representatives of the bank's owners - the Rothschild family - initially asked contenders to submit bids this week, however, they extended the deadline to next week due to pressure exerted by a number of potential buyers.

Last week, Isrope Participation, controlled by Baron Edmond de Rothschild, announced it intended to sell its General Bank holdings. Union Bank, controlled by Shlomo Eliyahu, has expressed

interest in purchasing General in efforts to expand the bank's infrastructure and activities.

Other potential bidders include the Edgar Fund and Brazilian banking millionaire Edmundo Saffdie. A consortium headed by the Damkner group also is reportedly considering a bid.

The Rothschild family holds 52.8% of General Bank, which, according to estimates, will be sold for about \$50m. - a figure higher than the bank's market value.

General Bank posted a first-quarter net profit of NIS 2.14m, compared with NIS 3.3m in the same period last year.

Builders not expecting major changes in housing market under Netanyahu

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

DESPITE Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu's election promises to considerably increase land supply, the real-estate market's general condition will not change significantly, according to Adam Buchman, economic adviser for the Association of Builders and Contractors.

However, experts fear that in the short term the market's current slowdown will persist, thus further destabilizing the nation's housing prices.

Asked to comment on the possibility that a religious party will control the Housing Ministry, Buchman said it is too early to gauge the meaning of such a prospect.

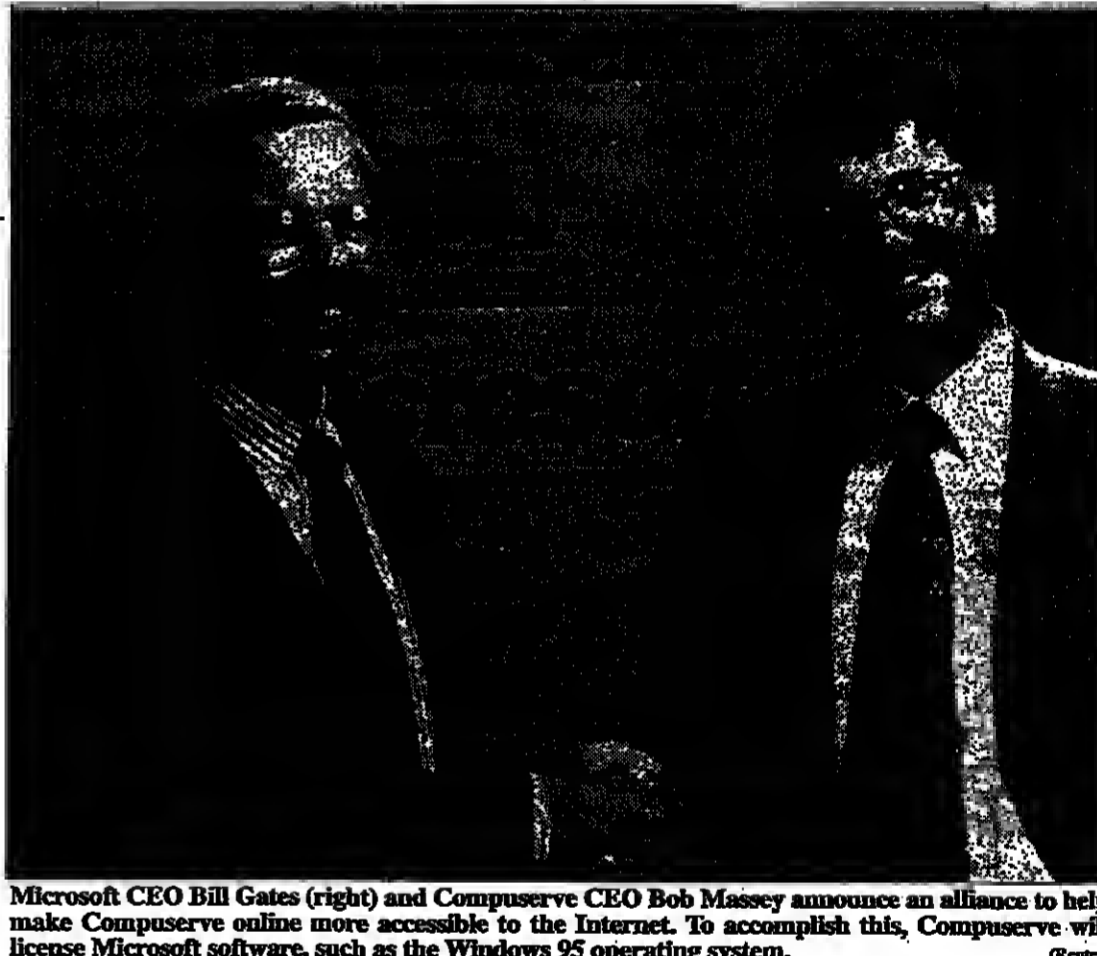
"At this point in time, it is very difficult to assume what will happen, but in general we do not have any expectations of the new government and don't expect any drastic changes," he said. "During the last few months, the ILA has significantly reduced the alloca-

tion of state-owned land for building in areas of high demand. Contractors said the drop in marketing is mainly due to ILA general manager Uzi Wexler's plans to step down from the position in July, as well as bureaucratic obstacles.

Buchman said there are also expectations that more financial assistance will be given to residents eligible for government subsidies. In the past, contractors and others in the real estate field have expressed dissatisfaction with the Labor government's policy of keeping subsidies virtually unchanged.

Buchman said apartment prices are expected to increase 6% in real terms this year, similar to last year's rise.

He said the expected increase in prices is mainly due to the slowdown in ILA allocation of land during the last few months, which has led to a significant drop in new building starts.



Microsoft CEO Bill Gates (right) and CompuServe CEO Bob Massey announce an alliance to help make CompuServe online more accessible to the Internet. To accomplish this, CompuServe will license Microsoft software, such as the Windows 95 operating system.

Table with 2 columns: Hebrew text and English text. Includes 'MUTUAL FUND FOR FOREIGN RESIDENTS' and 'Date: 4.6.96'.

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MINISTRY OF FINANCE - Accountant General. Bids are invited for the supply of goods and services for government ministries and agencies, located throughout Israel, as follows. Tender No. 6/96: Maintenance Services and HELP-DESK for PCs and Auxillary Equipment.

BEZEQ, The Israel Telecommunications Corp. Ltd. Tender No. 65/96/122/0 'MICHSAF' DEVELOPMENT OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. The following general conditions apply: 1. Pre-conditions: a. Parties submitting bids must comply with all laws...

BEZEQ, The Israel Telecommunications Corp. Ltd. Tender No. 25/95/164/0 TMX AIR-CONDITIONING UNIT, 8-12. The following general conditions apply: 1. Pre-conditions: a. Parties submitting bids must comply with all laws...

BEZEQ, The Israel Telecommunications Corp. Ltd. Tender No. 25/95/164/0 TMX AIR-CONDITIONING UNIT, 8-12. The following general conditions apply: 1. Pre-conditions: a. Parties submitting bids must comply with all laws...

Device lets user bypass Mango's expensive outgoing calls. Bezeq spokeswoman Ella Bar-Or said it was not aware of the Tango's existence until it was announced yesterday. Orange County bond offering goes to Wall Street. SANTA ANA/Calif. (Reuters) - A complex plan by California's Orange County to end 18 months of bankruptcy hinged yesterday on a \$90 million bond offering...

Want to keep in close touch with your securities till 11 PM? JOIN OUR TELEBANK. DIAL 02-523777 FROM 8 AM TO 11 PM. ISRAEL DISCOUNT BANK

ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS. Table with columns: Currency basket, U.S. dollar, Pound sterling, French franc, Swiss franc, Yen, etc. Includes sub-tables for Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) and Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates.

Vertical text on the left margin: ST, sic, ac, sol, sm, Pu, Dc, I, Pri, Ne, list, cor, S, fer, nu, wc, caf, es, He, ed, ple, C, for, Au, Nil, pri, ma, A, R, ar, as, DI, O, W, pe, 10, wo, Le, On, S, ol, we, An, C, O, R, e, A, S, Pe, At, acc, sin, year, by, con, Fo, As, Tol, Cal, Wc, Ph, Acc

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Handwritten note: ארבעה ימים

Shares up on optimism over Netanyahu

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET

ROBERT DANIEL



STOCKS rose yesterday as investors bet that Prime Minister-elect Biyomyio Netanyahu would be aggressive about selling state-owned enterprises.

NIS 74m. In May. Teva Pharmaceutical Industries rose 1.25%, Koor went up 2%, and Tadiran Ltd., a subsidiary of Koor, added 1.5%.

Analysts and investors continued to speculate about the country's next finance minister. "Foreign investors like a lot of [Netanyahu's] remarks about privatization, a process he's going to emphasize," said Daniella Fim, head of sales at the securities firm Batucha. "A lot will depend on the nature of the next government."

Among actively traded issues in Tel Aviv: First International Bank rose 0.75%, as Salomoo Brothers reiterated a buy recommendation on the stock. Bank Hapoalim went up 1%. Discount Bank and Bank Leumi were unchanged.

The Maof Index advanced 0.72 percent to 218.96, while the Two-Sided Index added 0.89% to 207.35.

The chemical companies were mixed. Alcolac Chemicals and Dead Sea Works gained 1.5% and 1.25% respectively, while Makhteshim was unchanged and Agan lost 0.25%.

The most active stock was Africa Israel Investments, a property company, up 4% on NIS 7.3 million worth of shares traded.

Clal Israel added 1.75%. Subsidiaries Clal Industries and Clal Electronics tacked on 1% and 0.5% respectively.

Elite lost 0.25%, while Osem jumped 1.75%. Supersol rose 1%, while rival Blue Square gained 2%.

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Dollar holds bulk of its gains against yen

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

LONDON (Reuters) - The dollar held the bulk of its recent gains against the yen in Europe yesterday but failed to get a foothold above the 109 yen level.

European stock markets were dull, given little direction from mixed early trade on Wall Street, which opened down and moved in and out of positive territory.

European bourses were lackluster, with scotment dulled by a mixed opening on Wall Street, where investors were keeping a close watch on the bond market.

The dollar had hit a high of 109.35 yen in late trading in New York on Tuesday, helped by US Treasuries regaining some of their recent losses ahead of Friday's important US employment report for May, which could influence US interest rate policy.

The yen remained under pressure across the board on speculation that Friday's Tankan report, the Bank of Japan's quarterly survey of business sentiment, will be weak. It had been weakened of late by growing speculation that a shaky Japanese banking system would force the Bank of Japan to keep interest rates on hold for now.

But dealers said the dollar's proximity to 110 yen and comments from former Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker and others injected a note of caution into a bullish market.

Analysts doubted whether the US government was willing to allow the dollar to rise over the psychologically-important 110-yen level unchallenged.

Economists said the economic justification for further dollar gains remained in place, but said there was a growing belief that the US and Japanese authorities wanted to prevent the dollar moving outside a broad 100-to-110 yen range.

Against the mark, the dollar was firm, taking fresh German industrial output data to its stride.

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Stocks rise on strong bond market, steady data

WALL STREET REPORT

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Blue-chip stocks closed higher yesterday, boosted by strength in the bond market, as investors awaited Friday's employment report.

According to early, unofficial results, the Dow Jones industrial average rose 31.77 points to 5,697.48.

About 377 million shares changed hands on the New York Stock Exchange, where advancing issues beat declines by about seven to five.

Against the mark, the dollar was firm, taking fresh German industrial output data to its stride.

CURRENCY CROSS-RATES

Table with columns: MARK, STERLING, YEN, SFR, FFY. Rows show exchange rates for various currencies.

TEL AVIV STOCKS

Main table of Tel Aviv stock prices with columns: Name, Price, Change, Volume, % Change. Includes sections for Commercial Banks, Mortgage Banks & Finance, Financial Institutions, Trade & Services, Property, Building & Agriculture, Investment Companies, and Oil Exploration.

INTERNATIONAL STOCK PRICES

Table of international stock prices with columns: Name, Price, Change, Volume, % Change. Includes sections for NEW YORK, EUROPEAN STOCKS, ASIAN STOCKS, and OCEANIC STOCKS.

Key Representative Rates table showing US dollar, Sterling, and Mark rates.

INFLATION AND METALS table showing various commodity prices.

New York market indexes table showing DJ Industrials, DJ Life, etc.

Other stock market indexes table showing FTSE 100, Nikkei, etc.

Israeli stocks in NY table showing prices for various Israeli companies.

Dollar cross-rates (US) table showing rates for various currencies.

Labor rates table showing rates for different labor categories.

Foreign financial data courtesy of CommStock Trading Ltd. table.

INFLATION AND METALS table showing commodity prices.

US commodities table showing prices for various commodities.

London commodities table showing prices for various commodities.

Spot market metals (US) table showing metal prices.

New York metal prices table showing metal prices.

London metal prices table showing metal prices.

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# Court rejects petition to count blank ballots

EVELYN GORDON

THE High Court of Justice yesterday unanimously rejected three petitions which asked that blank ballots not be disqualified from the final vote count.

Had the petitions been accepted, a second round of prime ministerial elections would have been required, since the law says a candidate must receive more than 50% of the valid ballots to be declared a winner in the first round. It is not known how many of the 148,000 invalidated ballots were blank, but according to the Central Elections Committee, there were probably enough so that had they been counted, neither candidate would have received 50% of the total votes.

The petitions claimed the law was meant to ensure that a candidate receive the confidence of at least 50% of the voting public before being declared a first-round winner. Blank ballots should be counted for this purpose, they argued, since blank votes are a legitimate way for a person to vote no-confidence in both candidates.

In response, both the state and prime minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu argued that the language of the law forbade blank ballots to be counted. Even if this were not the case, however, it would be wrong to accept the petitions now, they said, because this would be changing the rules of the game after the fact. People cast blank ballots with the understanding that they would not be counted, the state said, and it is not fair to retroactively change the meaning of their votes.

Justices Aharon Barak, Shlomo Levine, Gavriel Bach, Mishaal Cheshin and Yitzhak Zamir ruled that there was no need to even discuss this second issue, because the

state won on the first argument.

The law defines an invalid ballot as "any ballot which does not conform to the instructions of paragraph 76 [of the Election Law]." Paragraph 76 gives two options for a valid ballot: The standard ballots with the candidate's name printed on them or "a blank ballot on which is written the candidate's name, and that is all." From this, the justices said, it is clear that a blank ballot with nothing written on it does not meet the requirements of paragraph 76, and is therefore invalid.

This interpretation is consistent with both the purpose of the law and with traditional Israeli practice, since blank ballots have never been counted in Knesset elections, the justices added. It is also consistent with what the CEC told voters before the elections.

"The question of the desirability of blank ballots in Israeli elections is not at all a simple one," the ruling continued. "It might be appropriate for the Knesset to discuss this question prior to the next elections, and make a clear statement as to the place of the blank ballot in elections. But whatever the desirable arrangement might be - and we are not expressing any stand on this issue - it has no impact on our interpretation of the law [as it stands]."

The court also reacted in its ruling to implied statements by attorneys for Netanyahu and the Third Way that they should refrain from accepting the petitions because of the public outcry this would cause.

"If we had believed the petitioners were right, and that blank ballots do have to be counted according to existing law, we would not have hesitated to say so," the justices wrote. "That is what the rule of law means."

## Warsaw blast rocks Jewish restaurant

POLICE said vandals set off an explosion near a car parked outside a Jewish restaurant in Warsaw yesterday, shattering windows in the restaurant and badly damaging the car. The Menora restaurant was closed at the time and no one was hurt. Police said the car, and not the restaurant, was the target, and that the explosion appeared to be an act of vandalism. AP



Justice Theodor Orr, chairman of the Central Elections Committee, tells reporters in the Knesset yesterday that despite some technical difficulties, the country's first experience with directly electing the prime minister was a success. Orr is flanked by MK Dan Tichon (Likud) and Tamar Edri, director of the committee.

# CEC consensus: Direct elections worked

EVELYN GORDON

THE law for direct elections of the prime minister has some rough spots that need to be ironed out, but overall it worked well. This was the consensus of the Central Elections Committee.

Committee members were speaking at a reception in the Knesset yesterday to mark the official sealing of the election results. The numbers were unchanged from those which have already been published, however.

"The principal lesson to be learned from the new direct election law is positive," said MK Avraham Poraz (Meretz), noting that in previous years, even after the election was over no one knew who would be prime minister. "You know it's good when even representatives of the parties that lost say everything was run fairly."

"What happened was a victory for democracy," said MK Dan Tichon (Likud), citing the high voting rate, which approached 90% if emigrés are excluded.

"No other democratic regime has a voting

rate this high," agreed MK Ra'anan Cohen (Labor) proudly.

Despite this, both the MKs and CEC chairman Theodor Orr agreed that there were several technical problems that needed to be fixed. In particular, Cohen said, the system of having two envelopes - one for party elections and one for the prime ministerial race - clearly created confusion, as evidenced by the fact that over 5% of the ballots cast for prime minister were disqualified, compared to less than 2% of the ballots cast for parties.

Cohen also said something should be done to reverse the decline of the big parties and the increased strength of the smaller ones, saying this made it too difficult to govern. Poraz, however, praised the new system, saying it gave voters a chance to more accurately express their desires.

What needs most to be changed, Poraz added, is something that has nothing to do with

the law: The massive littering that accompanies campaigns.

"We still haven't succeeded in inculcating cultural norms regarding the environment into the elections," he said. "There is no reason for a campaign to entail environmental damage." Orr added that the law banning pictures of politicians in the electronic media before the elections was totally inappropriate to the current age. One of the hardest tasks the CEC faced, he said, was to strike a balance between freedom of the press and the need for fair coverage.

The session was marked by good will on all sides. Cohen opened his remarks by wishing prime minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu success in his new job, and Tichon responded with good wishes for outgoing Prime Minister Shimon Peres, whom he termed "one of [Israel's] greatest politicians."

Orr called Netanyahu to congratulate him on his victory and to give him the final election figures.

### WEATHER

Galun	15-28
Hadera	20-27
Tiberias	19-24
Afula	17-22
Samartha	17-20
Jerusalem	16-22
BeerSheva	17-22
Dead Sea	25-37
Eilat	23-35

Forecast: Slight rise in temperatures.

### AROUND THE WORLD

Location	Low	High	Wind	Cloud	Temp
Amsterdam	10	15	10	100	15
Berlin	12	18	12	100	18
London	11	16	11	100	16
Paris	13	19	13	100	19
Rome	14	20	14	100	20
Tokyo	18	24	18	100	24
Hong Kong	22	28	22	100	28
Beijing	20	26	20	100	26
Los Angeles	16	22	16	100	22
New York	15	21	15	100	21

### Winning cards

In yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chance card draw, the lucky cards were the queen of spades, nine of hearts, king of diamonds, and eight of clubs.

## 2 officers jailed after fatal Lebanon bombing

ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

TWO junior officers who led a convoy into a booby-trap that killed four soldiers in south Lebanon last week were sentenced to jail terms for not carrying out procedures to protect their convoy, the army said.

The two, both first lieutenants, were responsible for the first convoy which left the IDF liaison headquarters in the south Lebanon town of Marjayoun last Thursday on patrol. According to an investigation by Brig.-Gen. Giora Inbar, head of the IDF Liaison Unit to Lebanon, the two failed to make sure safety regulations were taken. A remote-controlled bomb went off as the convoy approached the Red Cross offices in town, slightly wounding two soldiers.

A second convoy which had been heading toward Metulla turned around and rushed to give aid to the wounded. Minutes later a second explosion killed three officers, including a lieutenant colonel, and mortally wounded a sergeant. Seven other soldiers were wounded.

The investigation found that the officers of the first convoy had not taken all the necessary precautions. One was given a 21-day jail sentence and the other was sentenced to 35 days in jail, the army said.

According to Yediot Aharanot, one officer was sentenced despite evidence that he had instructed his troops to take the precautionary measures and checked to make sure they were implemented. The second officer was reportedly directly responsible for making sure the instructions were carried out.

## At the festival



Rebecca Crown: Adult puppet theater, *Faustus in Africa*, by Handspring Co. from S. Africa, 9 p.m.

JT plaza: Children, mime Shimon Aplatoni, 5-45; family, Givat Zeev singers, 7 p.m.; rhythm and blues, soul and country with Charley Rizzo, and the Road to Emmaus ensemble, 8 p.m.

Small Hall: Vocal recital, soprano Tamara Romer, tenor Yevgeny Tcherniak, piano Yevgeny Senderowitch, 9 p.m.

JT foyer: Jazz, Mamelco Gutenopolis Quartet, 11 p.m. Gerard Behar: Dance, *Every Word a Gold Coin's Worth*, from Slovenia's Betontanc, 9 p.m. Dormition Abbey: Violinist Thomas Zehetmair plays Bach solo violin, 8:30 p.m.

Jerusalem Theater (JT): Sherover stage: Theater, *Vayomer Yavelech* by the Rim Ensemble, 7 p.m. Henry Crown: Comedy, *The Bible Abridged*, by The Reduced Shakespeare Co., 9 p.m.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Four killed in car accidents in North

Four people were killed in two separate accidents early yesterday morning. A car on Highway 65 near Moshav Ilana swerved into oncoming traffic, hitting a truck head-on. The car's driver and passenger died immediately. The truck driver was lightly injured and taken to Poriya Hospital.

A car near Kibbutz Afikim inexplicably drove off the road and crashed into an olive tree. Two passengers were killed immediately and the third was seriously injured.

#### Judges staying in Deri trial

The Jerusalem District Court judges in the Deri trial yesterday turned down a request by the defendants that they disqualify themselves. The defendants charged that the judges had formed their opinions on the case before the trial began.

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### THE LAST JEWS IN YEMEN

A new color video documenting the 2500 year old Jewish community in Yemen, just before their dream of Aliyah to Israel was fulfilled. The film follows Tamar Jaruffi-Ungar, a young Israeli of Yemenite descent in search of her ancestral roots. Included are scenes from places never filmed before portraying Jewish everyday life and the biblical, religious practices of this unique and ancient Jewish enclave. Filmed by Jack and Tamar Ungar. Produced by Larry Frisch. Narrated in English, 43 min.

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